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POLAND: Efforts To Combat Unrest

The government recently has been faced with short, sporadic strikes despite attempts to keep workers in line through economic coercion. The regime remains concerned over maintaining "control" despite some further easing of restrictions. Soviet reaction, meanwhile, to Premier Jaruzelski's speech on Monday generally has been positive.

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sporadic strikes lasting 10 to 15 minutes are occurring in some factories to protest martial law.

[REDACTED] Solidarity claims to have established a large, well-organized underground movement. [REDACTED] Poles increasingly are comparing the military regime to the Nazi occupation and that as a result the Army's image has suffered.

[REDACTED]

At the same time, the militia reportedly is trying to coerce workers into being more productive by firing those who resist martial law policies and invalidating their ration cards. Unemployed workers are not entitled to buy food from state stores until they receive new ration books and then they receive lower rations.

[REDACTED]

Comment: The strikes--the first reported since late December--probably are spontaneous expressions of worker dissatisfaction or actions initiated by local Solidarity activists. [REDACTED] Solidarity probably has not had much success yet at building an infrastructure beyond the local level. The actions, nevertheless, suggest that some of the initial shock of martial law has worn off.

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The regime will react quickly and, if necessary, harshly to the work stoppages to show workers that strikes will not be tolerated. Public disenchantment with the military will erode the government's most important source of credibility, making the authorities even more reluctant to loosen controls.

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27 January 1982

Approved for Release
Date AUG 1999

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Government threats to fire workers may cause some to hesitate about resisting openly, if only because family members would suffer from such actions. Although the measure may help initially to restore production levels, it will further embitter many workers and help guarantee prolonged and widespread passive resistance.

Martial Law Restrictions

The government is sending mixed signals regarding an easing of martial law restrictions. Since late last week it has allowed International Red Cross representatives to visit and talk privately with some internees and has permitted the reopening of foreign libraries and cultural centers sponsored by Western governments. [REDACTED] traveling in southern Poland, however, recently was stopped four times by police and once was held at gunpoint while his car was searched.

Comment: The regime is trying to give the impression, particularly for the benefit of some West Europeans, that it is easing restrictions significantly. Nevertheless, the diplomat's experience indicates continuing insecurity by the government and suggests that it may be tightening controls in some areas.

Reactions to Jaruzelski's Speech

TASS yesterday quoted Jaruzelski's address to the parliament at length, including his carefully hedged suggestion that martial law might be lifted at the end of February. The Soviets paid particular attention to the Premier's criticism of Western "interference" and sanctions and took note of his veiled threat that Poland would withdraw from the CSCE review session in Madrid if it encounters criticism there.

[REDACTED] the Church was disappointed at the lack of substance in Jaruzelski's speech and pessimistic about prospects for a dialogue. Archbishop Glemp and Cardinal Macharski are to travel to Rome next week to report on the situation to the Pope.

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Comment: The TASS commentary indicates that the Soviets approve the tone of Jaruzelski's remarks. It nonetheless may be significant that TASS the same day carried excerpts from an interview with Politburo member Olszowski, voicing hardline sentiments. The interview could be intended as a signal to Jaruzelski that if he fails to pursue satisfactory policies, there are others waiting in the wings who would be more willing to do so.

The speech is likely to reinforce Glemp's pessimism about Poland's future and his fears that bloodshed may soon ensue. His dissatisfaction with the regime's policies, however, probably will not change his view that Jaruzelski is a moderate.

Meat Exports

The government reportedly has resumed exports of meat products from at least one plant as a result of increased pork production and procurement.

Comment: Warsaw suspended meat exports last month in an effort to increase domestic supplies. The resumption of the exports--if it becomes widely known--will cause considerable resentment among Polish consumers who face reduced meat rations in January and February and a 22-percent reduction in meat supplies this year.

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